Leicester, Massachusetts, 28th Oct.
1844.

My dear Miss Carpenter,

Your kind letter to me, received in March last, has been too long unanswered. I acknowledged it in one of mine to Mr. Armstrong, with many thanks, which I now take pleasure in offering more directly. You were very good, also, to send me, more recently, a little packet of Reports of the Benevolent Associations connected with Lewin's Mead Chapel, with other publications of interest to me, - which was delivered to me by Mr. Watertson. I thank you for them, and wish I could send something to you of equal interest. — We have rejoiced with you, in the justice done to ~~you~~ British Unitarians by the Dissenters' Chapels Bill, and that the Government, particularly, made that Bill one of their own measures. I know no act of any public, legislative, body more worthy of admiration and eulogy. Many may be found, more extensively known, more generally applauded, but if any, certainly very few, more honorable, and apparently more entirely dictated by a sense of justice. No party in England could hope to benefit itself, in a political point of view, by befriending the Unitarians. So much the more honor is justly theirs, ~~for doing~~ so do. I can perceive no ~~other~~ reason for the success of the Bill than its inherent, manifest justice. We have much reason to be glad & thankful when justice, common, simple justice, obtains a victory over its numerous opponents.

In your letter, you ask me if I will "give you a brief sketch of the state of things" among the American Abolitionists, explaining the grounds of their differences, &c. This I have long intended to do, & regret that it has been delayed so long. In a recent letter from Mr. Armstrong, he makes similar inquiries. The whole subject, were I able to present you with all the facts in their correct order & connexion, would occupy a long space. I will do as well as I may, in reply to your question. T. Mr. A.

I design sending some ~~pamphlets~~ documents, to which I would refer you, which will give you light on the subject.

The present Anti-Slavery agitation in this country was commenced ~~in~~ about 1830. Previously to that time, sundry publications, giving to the Free States scattered hints of the condition & treatment of the Slaves, had been put out.) I well remember seeing one when I was a boy ~~of~~ perhaps 9 yrs. old; it was illustrated with some half-dozen engravings, and made a strong impression on my mind. I remember I read the stories, & thought of them, as having happened in some distant country. - (It was not till 1830, that any deliberate, determined attitude of resistance to Slavery was ~~taken~~ taken. Then it was ~~made~~ taken, in Boston, by William Lloyd Garrison, in conjunction with another man of great zeal and courage ~~(whose name I have forgotten)~~ named Isaac Knapp. Him I never knew. Mr. Garrison was Editor of the little paper which the two started, under the name of the Liberator, without patronage or any subscribers of consequence. He declared, in the outset, his resolution to be plain & bold as truth demanded - I will not give back, he said - I will not equivocate - and I will be heard. It is impossible for me now to give any account of the persecutions, to which this determination, fully and honestly acted out, led him, and ~~the~~ the cause. He was of course stigmatised, from one end of the Union to the other, as a madman, a fanatic, an incendiary, and regarded by thousands who had no sympathy with Slavery or Slaveholders as doing a vast deal of harm to the cause. It was all false, as time has proved. I saw, and was convinced, 6 or 8 years ago, that his course was as near right, as man can expect to attain to. The most efficient Abolitionists, men & women, have ~~expressed~~ maintained, and now ~~express~~ maintain, the same general views of the Anti-Slavery question which he has held. They are known among us as the old-organised Anti-Slavery party, so far as they can justly be called a party. They are the hard-working Abolitionists - those who are aiming to awaken the national conscience, to regenerate the public sentiment; and with wonderful success have their efforts been attended. - The cause went on for many years with the most entire harmony on the part of its friends. Opposition, persecution, banded them together. They were too few, to think of dwelling on the differences of opinion, exist-

This was Jarvis's Portraiture of Slavery

part of the

among themselves on other matters, and so Whigs & Democrats, Orthodox and Heterodox, Congregationalists & Presbyterians, Trinitarians and Unitarians, Baptists, Methodists, Quakers and all, united with one heart & mind in carrying forward the great cause. [The demon of Slavery saw this, and howled. ha! ha! SiNs] It determined to destroy this harmony. This could not have been effected, had all who pretended to love and serve the Anti-Slavery cause been sincere; had they loved it more than they loved sect, and party, and personal advancement. This was unhappily not the case. The cry was raised against Mr. Garrison and his friends that they were infidels - that they sought the destruction of the Church, the overthrow of Christianity. French Republicanism and Jacobinism were quoted;- Fanny-Wright-ism, and all other feared & hated notions were ascribed to Mr. G., and believed all over the country, just as the slanders about Unitarianism and its supporters had been spread all over the land, - and by the self-same men, to a great extent - and everywhere believed, then and now. - [Many, who formerly ran well, under the pressure of this storm of misrepresentation and abuse, turned their backs upon the cause. They joined in the abuse of Mr. Garrison and his friends, as the surest way of gaining favor and confidence with the pro-slavery folks, and the best way of covering their retreat. About 5 or 6 years ago, a paper was put forth by several clergymen (all of the Calvinistic order), called the "Clerical Appeal". It was the first note sounded by the deserters, and most meanly & falsely attacked the old Abolitionists. One of its principal signers, Rev. Charles Fitch, has since made an honorable confession of the wrong he did. I wish I had the paper at hand, that I might quote some of its very strong expressions of self-condemnation, and of justice to Mr. Garrison. The grounds on which Mr. G. and his friends were attacked thus, and the mad-dog-cry of infidelity raised against them were simply & solely these - In the prosecution of the anti-Slavery cause, it became at length perfectly demonstrated that the American Churches were the chief supports of Slavery.] (I presume you have seen some of the mass of evidence which has been published, ~~supporting~~ proving this position.) They would not change their ground! Nothing would induce them to leave their position. ~~Join~~ Side by side with Slavery, in full fellowship with it, and take an anti-Slavery position. They freely undertook the defence of Slavery, from reason & from the Bible.

They who did so were not rebuked, or disowned, or in any way opposed by the great mass of Northern religionists. They were still recognised as good Christians, and honorable men. [In this state of things – the so-called Church throwing its whole, heavy, dead weight directly on the wheels of the Anti-Slavery enterprise, ~~[illegible]~~ embarrassing and denouncing it – & Mr. G. could not doubt what his duty was. He spoke plainly & strongly in condemnation of this course – he declared that the Churches & Ministers, who gave to Slavery the right hand of fellowship, could not be, were not, the Churches & Ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ. This self-evident truth was denounced as unmitigated Infidelity. – I cannot enlarge on this point.] Much as Mr. G. was condemned for it, this truth is everyday more & more commending itself to the consciences of the people, and is doing a great work in all departments of the Church in America – the Nominal Church is striving to become a Real Church.

[I have thus named a principal cause of the division. One illustration of it, happening within my personal knowledge, just occurs to me. A Calvinistic minister, conversing with me 6 or 7 years ago on the Anti-Slavery question, said to me, "If the Abolitionists would only throw Mr. Garrison overboard, they would have a vast accession of numbers and strength from those who can never consent to act under such a leader." I replied to him, "The Abolitionists will never do that" (this was before I had any personal knowledge of Mr. Garrison – I knew the estimation in which Anti-Slaverymen held him) "they know Mr. Garrison to be honest, true, intrepid – they would despise themselves to attempt to cast off so faithful a fellow-worker, and would deserve scorn & failure if they did attempt it". "Very, well," he replied, "they will not have our support", or something to that effect. The truth is that the Calvinistic party, in this country, have so long been accustomed to rule, direct and manage, as they pleased, all benevolent enterprises and all moral and religious associations, that they could not submit to join in a cause led by Wm. L. Garrison, and in which Unitarians, Quakers, and Women were admitted to an equal participation.]

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My letter is spreading itself out to a most unexpected, and I fear you will think unwarrantable length. —

The word "women" in the last paragraph, leads me to speak of another (alleged) cause, of the ~~separation of the~~ division among the Abolitionists. At the very beginning of the Anti Slavery & Movement, it was found that to no individuals did this righteous cause make a stronger appeal, from none receive a warmer response, than from certain noble and "honourable" women. Their sympathy, and their labours were warmly welcomed. Some of them were urged to take a more prominent post than they were inclined to take, by individuals who afterwards pursued a very opposite course. Five or six years ago, when it was found ~~the~~ ~~the~~ necessary to sacrifice Mr Garrison & his chief supporters, in order to conciliate the good orthodox folks and bring them into the anti slavery ranks, the action of the women in the cause was thought to be a very good handle for the purpose. Mr. G. and the old abolitionists have always contended for the right of women to act freely, in the Anti Slavery field, as their conscience & sense of duty should prompt. They have asked no more than this. This they insisted upon - the mental & moral freedom of woman, as of man, in the department of moral effort. They refused to put a chain upon woman, while professedly laboring ~~to remove~~ one from the Slave. Many abolitionists who would say that, in their view, women ought not to assume a public & conspicuous post in the cause, would also say that their views were not the measure of other persons' duty - that each ought ~~right~~ to follow his and her own conviction of right & duty, and that no trammels should be put on any one, who came forward to act, impelled by a sense of duty. This would have been clear

enough to the squeamish folks, who dreaded lest the Abolitionists should encourage the women to violate St. Paul's rules of female action, had they been willing and disposed to be convinced. This was not the thing. They sought some plea on which the Ad Abolitionists might be made a proscribed body - and this "woman-question" they thought was the very thing. Straightway the alarm was sounded; all the changes on St. Paul's directions about women were rung; a holy horror of the cavalier treatment which the Sacred book received at the hands of the ungodly Abolitionists was professed and expressed. - Never did more barefaced, shameless <u>hypocrisy</u> exist! They, who then cried out against Mr. G. and his friends, who and what were they? Those very men had urged Mrs. Lydia M. Child, years before, to address a public meeting. Those very men, who now led off on this woman-question, had drawn up and signed papers commissioning Sarah and Angelina Grimké (as public agents and lecturers - two young women of South Carolina, whose father had been a Slaveholder, and Sarah G. herself had for several years owned a female slave, as I heard her state;) ~~They had~~ These two women preferred not to become Agents of any Society, but chose to speak entirely on their own account & responsibility, and did so, addressing many hundreds of audiences all over the Free States. This does not alter, or impair the pertinency of, the fact, that their Commission as public agents & lecturers was drawn up & signed & offered them by men - the very men who, a few years after, to effect a cowardly & malignant purpose, professed the deepest horror of women acting in public, and who actually, in 1840, seceded from the American Anti-Slavery Society, <u>for no other reason</u> than that a woman - Abby Kelley - was put upon a Committee for recommending Business to the Society at its Annual Meeting. I was present at ~~that~~ meeting, held in New York, and was a witness to all these proceedings. The woman-question is no longer us

as a handle. The endeavour to make it a weapon against true antiSlavery has wholly failed, and the blow has recoiled on themselves - returned to plague the inventors. It was found to work so badly for them, that one of the men who had tried hard to use it against Mr. G. & his friends, afterwards called it the "confounded woman-question", and wished it might be forgotten. This was Elizur Wright Jr., who is now in England - once a fiery abolitionist, and a very able writer - now engaged in selling a translation of Fontaine's Fables, made by himself, & published in a handsomely illustrated edition. - I am again reminded of the necessity of brevity.

[I have not touched upon the Political divisions among the Abolitionists. It is maintained by Mr. Garrison and others, - I am inclined to believe they are wholly in the right - that the "Liberty party" is employed mostly as a cover for those who dare not, or will not, carry their AntiSlavery into their Churches and religious bodies. Such, so far as I know the individuals of the Liberty party, is very generally true. They will submit to the greatest indifference to the Anti-Slavery Cause in their ministers, their Church, their denomination, while they demand that the individual for whom they vote, for a secular office, shall belong to their party; let him be never so good an Abolitionist, they will not give him their vote, if he is the candidate either of the Whig or Democratic party. - They rely too on political power, and comparatively neglect moral - the great instrument by which truth & duty are to be brought home to the slaveholder, and cause him to "undo the heavy burdens & let the oppressed go free." They spend their time & strength in political broils & squabbles, & electioneering, and it is getting to be more & more believed, of the leaders of the Liberty party, that while they talk so loudly of the Slave's good, they mean their own - i.e. their political advancement.]

I have taken up so much space, my dear Miss Carpenter, in my rambling reply to your inquiry as to leave myself little room for any thing else. I doubt not you will be able to pick out my meaning, and with the better aid of the pamphlets I design sending to Mr. Armstrong be able to form an opinion for yourself concerning our differences & controversies.

They do not much disturb us, I think. Things are working well. God will surely cause the right to triumph; in that faith, we are strong and feel our labors a privilege.

I wished to speak at some length of the excellent letter of Dr. W. B. Carpenter (your brother, I presume) published in the July number of the Christian Examiner. It was a very sound & conclusive argument. Mr. Gannett exposed his weak point, in his preliminary remarks.

Please remember me kindly to your Sister Anna. Her book, with your loose sheets, for autographs, are still in Mr. Waterston's hands. I shall be looking out now for an opportunity of returning it to you, by some person going to Bristol. I have been hoping to go to Boston this week, meaning if I went to take the book again into my own care, and circulate it in some quarter where it has not been.

The "Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Fair" will be held in Christmas week, as heretofore. I hope you will again favour it with some contribution, as will also the lady you named in your letter — Mrs. Geo. Fripp — and others. — I would also be remembered to Miss Estlin and to Mr. Estlin, whose kind attentions to myself & brother will not be forgotten.

I suppose we shall have, in the course of the winter, the Memoir of Dr. Channing, which his son, and his nephew Wm. H. Channing, have been preparing for nearly a year past. I hope it will be worthy of its subject; I think it will be. This reminds me to inquire about the Memoir of Mr. Acton. Mr. James wrote to me about it last winter, asking some aid from me in obtaining subscribers, &c. I replied to him that I would with great pleasure give what assistance I could, if he would give me a few items of information, as to the size & price of the work, number of volumes, &c., quite necessary in submitting a subscription paper for signers. I have heard nothing from Mr. James since. I hope he is well. Please give my kind regards & remembrance to him.

Before you receive this, our Unitarian ministers' reply to the British Ministers' Address to us on Slavery will have been received in England. It has been most strangely delayed — to me

I must say, unaccountably delayed. I hope the Committee have given some good reasons justifying the delay, and that the reasons will be made known, in justice to us whom they represented, as well as to our English brethren.

You will be glad to have me stop, and I will stop therefore, assuring you of my sincere esteem and regard, and wishing you all success in your benevolent efforts, and every blessing.

Your friend and - shall I not say - brother,

Samuel May, Jr.

[P.S. You might naturally inquire if there is no prospect of healing the differences and dissensions existing among Abolitionists. There is, I fear, little reason to hope that men who have espoused the Anti-Slavery Cause for any but the highest motives, who are not willing to lay upon its altar their reputation, their fair fame among men, will ever come to agree in their views & modes of action with such men as W.L. Garrison, N.P. Rogers, Edmund Quincy, Wendell Phillips, and such women as Abby Kelley, who have made these sacrifices. No! I must say I see no prospect of a cessation of existing differences among those who are called Anti-Slavery. Those who are really such will not differ so far, as to be hostile to each other. Meantime, as I have already said, these differences are not doing so much harm as at a distance may appear. The good work is advancing - is greatly prospering. There can be no doubt of it.] Let those who have espoused it for truth's sake and justice' sake, only persevere in demanding full, immediate, unconditional freedom - (i.e. with no other than the conditions which affect all inhabitants of the country) - for the slave, abating no jot of their high purpose, making no compromise of their righteous demand, relying on the power of Truth and the promises of the Almighty, and a speedy, certain triumph must ensue. Farewell

Nov. 8th Since the preceding was written, I have seen the November number of the "Christian Examiner". It contains a letter from Dr. S.H. Dickson of Charleston, S.C. to the Editor, being a reply to Dr. Carpenter's Letter in the July No. I have read the letter. Some portions of his reasoning I do not feel myself competent to controvert - that he partakes largely of that feeling which revolts from acknowledging the colored man as our equal in any sense, and which would even exert itself to keep him from rising above a certain level, is quite obvious - and that, as a whole, though couched in respectful and dignified language, it is not a very formidable argument against the capacity of the colored, or Negro, race. I am strongly persuaded,

her own theories as he will, he & his fellow-believers have some of the most stubborn facts to contend against, which Prejudice itself is stronger than which can scarcely be found connected with any subject. I wish Dr. Carpenter could have some correspondence with Dr. McCune Smith, a physician of New York city - a colored man, educated (in part at least) at Edinburgh, if my memory serve me, and as a thinker & writer on a par with many distinguished gentlemen of that city. - I must stop, whether I will or not. —